

Hello. My name is Brian Wenig, and I also work for the unintentioned nonprofit Cloud Peak Energy. I own a small business in Gillette also and some other property. So I am intrinsically tied to the community. All of my three children graduated or were born in Wyoming and graduated from Gillette High School. I also have four grandchildren in Gillette. I have been in surface coal mining in Wyoming for over 35 years and presently am the interim manager of Cordero Rojo Mine. On the face of it, it seems a bit silly to be discussing potential increases to the cost to mine coal at a time when coal companies are dropping like flies. It is obviously the intent of groups such as wildlife authorities and the Sierra Club to make coal mining prohibitively expensive so they keep it in the ground. With natural gas prices at seemingly historic lows, this strategy could work for a while, but these are unsustainable natural gas prices. And here you might want to take out your notebook. I would predict that within one year from now that natural gas prices will be approximately twice the price it is today, and take that to the bank. I intend to. The BLM is tasked with obtaining fair market value for coal leases from companies willing to bid on leases. The leases that were let, it is obvious the estimates of fair market value are artificially high. So I tend to agree with my colleague Beth Goodnough that we should be talking more about lowering some of these. None of this is about the value of coal. None of this is about the leasing process. All of this is about so-called climate change. The EPA, Gina McCarthy has recently admitted that the war on coal is not about fighting for climate change but to show leadership and garner support for an international climate change agreement that was reached in Paris. It is obvious that the rest of the world is not paying any attention to this leadership as hundreds of power plants, coal-fired power plants are either under construction or in the planning process throughout the world. With experts projecting worldwide electricity demands to double by 2040, coal is projected to go from supplying 40 percent of the fuel for this demand down to 28 percent. Yet there's still an increase in coal usage worldwide from roughly 8 billion tons to 11 billion tons. So just for a moment, let's pretend, though, that global climate change is truly real and it's the most pressing issue in the world as the President has stated. Then we are faced with two clear choices. Either we figure out

how to burn coal in an environmentally responsible manner, or we get rid of about five billion people. I honestly don't think we want to go there. Thank you.